

REMARKS

Claims 1-40 are pending; claims 13 and 16-40 were withdrawn; claim 1 is amended herein, and therefore claims 1-12, 14 and 15 remain for consideration.

Claims 1-6, 9-12, 14 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Althaus (U.S. Pat. No. 5,447,084). The rejection is traversed and reconsideration is respectfully requested, particularly in view of the clarifying amendment to claim 1.

In the Final Office Action of September 17, 2003, the Examiner states that “[i]n order to overcome the rejection, the structure of the guard ribs are formed from the same material as the body needs to be incorporated in the claims.” Accordingly, claim 1 is amended herein pursuant to the Examiner’s suggestion to overcome the rejection. More specifically, claim 1 is amended to clarify that the guard ribs are formed from the same material as the plastic body. It is therefore respectfully submitted that amended claim 1 is in allowable form. Moreover, because claims 2-6, 9-12, 14 and 15 each ultimately depend from and thereby incorporate the limitations of claim 1, these dependent claims are likewise deemed to be in allowable form for at least the reasons set forth for claim 1.


Claims 7 and 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Althaus (U.S. Pat. No. 5,447,084) in view of King et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,167,625). The rejection is traversed and reconsideration is respectfully requested, particularly in view of the clarifying amendment to claim 1.

Claims 7 and 8 each ultimately depend from and thereby incorporate the limitations of claim 1. It is therefore respectfully submitted that claims 7 and 8 are in allowable form for at least the reasons set forth for claim 1.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1-12, 14 and 15 are in condition for allowance. All issues raised by the Examiner having been addressed, an early action to that effect is earnestly solicited.

No fees or deficiencies in fees are believed to be owed. However, authorization is hereby given to charge our Deposit Account No. 13-0235 in the event any such fees are owed.

Respectfully submitted,

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